

KBSNA sessions to be held at AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Nov. 17-18

For the seventh year in a row, the Karl Barth Society of North America will sponsor a program just prior to the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, to be held in Philadelphia in November.

There will be a session on Friday afternoon, November 17, with a second session on Saturday morning, November 18.

The AAR/SBL Annual Meeting officially begins on Saturday afternoon. The KBSNA sessions are listed as AM20 and AM40 in the "Additional Meetings" section of the 1995 AAR/SBL program book.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY

Readers of the Newsletter (and anyone else who is interested) are invited to join the Karl Barth Society of North America.

To become a member of the Barth Society, send your name, address, and annual dues of \$10.00 to:

Professor Russell Palmer
Dept. of Philosophy and Religion
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

Members whose dues were last paid prior to September 1994 are urged to send in their annual renewal.

A Center for Barth Studies?

For some time, members of the Karl Barth Society have talked about establishing a Barth archive. Since the beginning of the KBSNA in the early 1970s, David Demson has maintained a collection of Barth materials in Toronto, but it has not been developed and maintained in any systematic way.

In June, Prof. Stephen Crocco, Director of the Library at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary presented to the Society's Executive a preliminary plan for something much more substantial—a Center for Barth Studies.

[continued on page 2]

The Barth Society session on *Friday afternoon, November 17*, will run from 3:45 to 6:15 p.m. It will be held in Meeting Room 413 of the Philadelphia Marriott, which is the main hotel across from the convention center.

At 3:45 **Kendall Soulen** (Wesley Theological Seminary) will make a presentation on the topic "**Karl Barth and the Future of the God of Israel.**" (See preview elsewhere in this issue.)

At 5:00 **Eugene F. Rogers Jr.** (University of Virginia) will speak on "**Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth in Convergence on Romans 1?**" (See preview elsewhere in this issue.)

The *Saturday morning* session from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. on *November 18*, in Room 415 of the Marriott Hotel, will be devoted to conversation with **Bruce L. McCormack** (Princeton Theological Seminary), on his recent book ***Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936.***

Center for Barth Studies? (continued)

The difference between this concept and an "archive" is that the latter would be simply a reference collection of materials by and about Barth, while a full-fledged center would go beyond the archive function to offer other services as well.

If a Center for Barth Studies (CBS) is established, a number of issues would need to be resolved. Crocco identified the following:

- **Ownership:** Does the host institution or the KBSNA own the materials collected? If they are owned by the Society, they can be moved if necessary. On the other hand, the institution might not want to relinquish materials it has acquired, even if its interest in Barth were to decline. Crocco suggests that ideally, an institution would make a long-term commitment to the CBS, and would also agree to relinquish the materials to the KBSNA if it no longer actively supports the CBS.

- **Relationship with the KBSNA:** Would the Center help coordinate the efforts of the KBSNA? Would it take over the publication of the Society's Newsletter?

- **Location and facilities:** How do the location and other facilities of an institution affect an offer to house the CBS? Should the CBS be located at an institution with a strong collection of theological books and journals, affordable housing and dining facilities? Must the location be convenient to the membership and other Barth scholars?

- **Fund raising:** Is the Executive prepared to engage in fund raising to support the CBS? This would include modest steps such as raising the membership dues (currently \$10 a year) and ambitious measures like seeking funding from foundations. (Crocco warns that once an institution smells money, its motives will be mixed at best!)

Example: the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies

Crocco points to the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College as an example of what can be done, given sufficient space, staff, funds, and interest.

The purpose of the Meeter Center is to promote Calvin studies and to act as a clearinghouse for Calvin scholarship. It tries to collect copies of all publications dealing with Calvin. The Center is located in a wing of the Calvin College and Seminary Library. It has a reading room with tables, shelves, a row of file cabinets, and a secretary's desk. There is also a Director's office, a small conference room, a work room for storage and processing, and two offices for research fellows. The wing is endowed so that its maintenance is not included in the Center's operating budget.

The Meeter Center's budget (approximately \$100,000 a year) includes the following:

1. A half-time salary and travel funds for the Director. Calvin Theological Seminary pays the rest of the salary because the Director is a member of that faculty.

2. A third-time salary for a Curator/Librarian. The rest is paid by the Calvin College Library where this person works the remainder of his/her time. The Library catalogs books, fiche, etc. for the Meeter Center.

3. A salary for a Secretary or Administrative Assistant.

4. Travel expenses for two Governing Board meetings a year.

5. Approximately four summer scholarships a year (\$2,000 and the use of a study room).

6. Each year the Center spends \$3,000 for books related to Calvin and \$10,000 for rare editions of Calvin's works.

7. Supplies and photocopying.

8. Newsletter production and mailing.

In addition to the Meeter Center, the Lutheran Brotherhood Reformation Research Library at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and the Office of the Works of Jonathan Edwards project at Yale Divinity School are other models that could be investigated.

Call for Proposals

The KBSNA Executive adopted Crocco's draft of a call for proposals as follows:

The Executive of the Karl Barth Society of North America invites proposals from institutions interested in serving as the home of the Center for Barth Studies (CBS). The purpose of the CBS is to promote Barth scholarship by serving as a clearinghouse and library for researchers.

The CBS would provide the following services:

1. Solicit information about works in progress, works recently published, reviews, conferences, lectures, etc., and direct such information to the KBSNA Newsletter.

2. Seek to acquire copies of every item in the *Bibliographie Karl Barth* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1992); send citations of items not in the *BKB* to the publisher for inclusion in revised editions; publish supplementary bibliographies as the need arises; and receive donations of their works from writers.

3. Collect copies of the volumes in Karl Barth's study, and of materials cited by Barth.

4. Solicit letters, papers, etc. by Karl Barth not previously documented.

5. House the archives of the KBSNA.

6. Create and monitor a Barth Homepage on the Internet.

7. Promote the distribution of Barth materials in non-print formats.

8. Work with the KBSNA to encourage the discussion of Barth's thought and writings in academic and library societies around the world.

Center for Barth Studies? (continued)

An institution willing to serve as the home of the CBS should be mindful of the following:

1. The CBS should be in or near a library with the facilities for acquiring, cataloging, storing, borrowing, and distributing materials.
2. The host library should be committed to acquiring materials that complement the CBS, e.g. the recently published collection *Der Kirchenkampf*.
3. The institution should provide study space and access to reasonably priced meals and housing for scholars who wish to visit the CBS.
4. The institution should view the CBS as an asset, i.e. it should look with favor on faculty and librarians who spend a specified amount of time on CBS.
5. The institution should view the CBS as an appropriate place for student work-study jobs and graduate assistantships. (Much of the daily work of the CBS can be done by students and volunteers.)
6. The institution's development office should be willing to work with the KBSNA to raise funds for the CBS.
7. The institution should have the space and resources to allow the CBS to grow.
8. The institution should be willing to agree to terms that allow for the transfer of materials, etc. to another site if the institution no longer wishes to support the CBS at a level that encourages it to flourish.

News from the KBSNA Executive Board meeting

The Executive of the Karl Barth Society of North America met on June 8, 1995, at the home of the President, Ronald Goetz, in Elmhurst, Illinois. Those present, in addition to Prof. Goetz, were David Demson (General Secretary), Stephen Crocco, Donald Dayton, George Hunsinger, James Nelson, Russell Palmer, and Scott Rodin.

1. The Secretary read a letter from Principal William Klempa, Montreal, recounting his ideas for an International Barth Congress in the year 2000. The Executive agreed that such a congress would be very worthwhile, but felt that the Executive should not commit itself to raising the \$15,000 or more required. It decided to ask Principal Klempa to continue planning for the congress if he could see where the needed \$15,000 could be found.

2. Scott Rodin agreed to organize a conference next year at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. The conference will be held in June, but

not on June 22-24 (the date of the conference at Luther Seminary in St. Paul).

3. Stephen Crocco submitted a preliminary proposal for a Center for Barth Studies (see separate article). The Executive adopted the proposal and named a subcommittee to resolve a number of questions growing out of the proposal. The subcommittee includes Stephen Crocco (convener), Donald Dayton, and George Hunsinger. In addition, James Nelson indicated his willingness to serve if needed, and it was noted that Scott Rodin's expertise could be helpful. The Executive also granted the subcommittee power to solicit invitations from institutions interested in becoming the site of such a center. The following seminaries were mentioned as possibilities: Pittsburgh, Princeton, Eastern Baptist, Fuller, Yale, and Toronto. However, the subcommittee was authorized to advertise as widely as it sees fit.

4. The following were nominated for membership on the Executive for 1995-96: Steven Crocco, Donald Dayton, David Demson, Ron Goetz, John Hesselink, James Nelson, Russell Palmer, and Scott Rodin.

5. The Secretary read a letter from Charles Dickinson III, a Director of the Society, suggesting that the KBSNA consider some kind of commemoration of the life and work of Markus Barth. The Secretary was instructed to write to Dr. Dickinson asking if he might undertake the translation of M. Barth's *Das Herrenmahl*, the publication of which the KBSNA would support.

6. The Executive decided not to seek financial support for the publication of the Barth-Brunner correspondence volume (as part of the collected works of Karl Barth in German).

KBSNA business meeting held at Elmhurst Conference in June

A brief business meeting of the Karl Barth Society of North America was held at 6:30 p.m. on June 8, 1995 in the Frick Center at Elmhurst College, with President Goetz in the chair.

David Demson, General Secretary of the KBSNA, thanked Russ Palmer on behalf of the Society for editing and publishing the KARL BARTH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER. He indicated that the Newsletter was a major factor in giving the members of the Society a sense of belonging to the Society.

Steve Crocco described to the membership the concept of a Center for Barth Studies as adopted earlier by the Executive.

The following were elected to the Executive for 1995-96: Professors Crocco, Dayton, Demson, Goetz, Hesselink, Nelson, Palmer, and Rodin.

Lutherans plan 7th Biennial Barth Conference

Wayne Stumme, Director of the Institute for Mission in the U.S.A. of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has announced preliminary plans for the seventh in a series of biennial conferences based on the theology of Karl Barth.

The theme will be: "The Necessary 'No!' and the Indispensable 'Yes!' — Theological Controversy, Christology, and the Mission of the Church Today."

The conference will be held June 22-24, 1996 at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Further details will be included in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Conference on Barth and Post-Christian World held at Elmhurst College in June

The 1995 summer conference sponsored by the Karl Barth Society of North America was held June 8-9 on the campus of Elmhurst College (near Chicago). The theme of the conference was: "Karl Barth and the Christian Proclamation to a Post-Christian World."

The conference theme was addressed by **John Howard Yoder** (University of Notre Dame), **Walter Lowe** (Candler School of Theology, Emory University), **George Hunsinger** (Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton), and **Scott Rodin** (Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia).

JOHN HOWARD YODER

Whereas the conference title labelled our present world "post-Christian," John H. Yoder preferred the terms "post-Christendom" or "post-Constantinian," questioning whether the past ever was anything that could appropriately be called "Christian." Yoder thus titled his presentation "Karl Barth, *Post-Christendom* Theologian."

"We do well do mine the Barthian corpus for the places where his aptness to speak to where western culture is now going is especially discernible, *precisely because* he asked the questions theology should always ask," Yoder declared.

He contrasted Barth's way of reading Scripture with two alternatives. The "high scholastic vision" of the post-Reformation period ("still with us in fundamentalism") "subordinated the actual reading of scriptural texts to an a priori discussion of how the texts were so written and preserved as to be infallibly revelatory and how they should be so read as to coincide with an all-inclusive system of revelatory propositions."

On the other hand, the modern approach "filtered the ancient texts through a different a priori grid of questions about how they got written and what they can possibly mean in our age."

In contrast, Barth "made full use of all the tools of linguistic, historical, literary criticism, yet without apologetic worry about who really wrote the texts or whether modern readers can enter into that world view." Yoder considers Barth's "straightforward reading of canonical texts" to be "postmodern rather than precritical."

In Yoder's view, Barth's approach "is essentially the free-church approach" to Scripture, where "the reader is not the accredited possessor of the hermeneutic, but the congregation created by the message they read together."

Yoder discussed Barth's treatment of baptism as a point where Barth comes close to sharing the concerns of the Anabaptist or free-church tradition.

He also commented on Barth's 1946 essay on *Christian Community and Civil Community*. "If the Word of God becomes manifest in the event of its being proclaimed and heard," said Yoder, "then that part of the wider humanity which has not participated in that event of hearing must be recognized as such" and its structures (not just the state) must somehow be "addressed without ascribing faith to them."

He criticized Barth's "hasty" use of analogies in *Christian Community and Civil Community* as a way of suggesting norms for civil society (e.g. because the church recognizes various gifts, the state should have a separation of powers).

"There is about this grab-bag of social desiderata none of the architectonic elegance we are used to seeing when Barth organized a question," Yoder observed.

"I am prepared to argue strongly for the paradigmatic role of the people of God in offering the world a vision of God's restoration of humanity, in Christ, in the faith community, and beyond," he continued. But "Barth's whimsical effort in this outline weakened the case he could have made..." Still, "the basic point of the essay on the two kinds of community remains..."

For Yoder, it is not primarily the modern (or post-modern) cultural situation but the heart of the Christian message itself that liberates us from the Constantinian mistake. And he credits Karl Barth with recognizing this.

WALTER LOWE

Walt Lowe was the speaker at the Thursday evening banquet. His topic was "Beyond the Hall of Mirrors: Barth, Kierkegaard, and Post-Structuralism."

Lowe suggested that Kierkegaard could be read as prolegomena to Barth. He believes that Barth's theology needs some prolegomena, and that Kierkegaard has what Barth needs. On the other hand, he argued, Post-Structuralism provides a way of dealing with Kierkegaard's anthropocentrism.

Noting that Christians need to beware of the pitfall of conforming to culture, Lowe also pointed out

that critics must avoid becoming a mirror-image of the culture they oppose.

In discussing the postmodernist and deconstructionist aversion to dualism, Lowe noted that, while Barth has been criticized for being dualistic, Barth's criticism of religion in Romans was that is too dualistic. He also observed that while Barth's theology does make use of strong distinctions, such distinctions should not be used dualistically.

Unfortunately, perhaps owing to the good food and wine at the banquet, the editor's notes do not provide a sufficient basis for preparing a satisfactory summary of Walt's lecture. Prof. Lowe has, however, offered to write for a future issue of the Newsletter an account of what he has to say about Barth in his recent book, *The Wound of Reason* (Indiana University Press).

GEORGE HUNSINGER

"The Politics of the Nonviolent God: Reflections on René Girard and Karl Barth" was George Hunsinger's topic the following morning.

Calling the work of René Girard (who teaches cultural anthropology and literary criticism at Stanford) "rich, intriguing, and suggestive," Hunsinger summarized Girard's sacrificial theory of social cohesion and its application to myth, ritual, and religion. Girard sees biblical religion, however, as unique in that it does not legitimate violence but unmasks it and identifies with the victim. Jesus breaks the spiral of violence by submitting to violence, thereby revealing and uprooting the structural roots of all religion.

Hunsinger sees Girard as issuing a powerful challenge to Christians "to see both theology and ethics as determined by the primacy of nonviolent love."

Despite many provocative and illuminating insights, however, Girard's understanding of Christianity is, in Hunsinger's judgment, "marred by basic flaws." Girard offers an essentially "Pelagian" solution to an inherently "Augustinian" problem, and his "low Christology" needs to be improved by a higher view in which the incarnation, atoning death, and resurrection of Christ are taken seriously. Hunsinger's paper sought to "reaffirm Girard's provocative thesis that the biblical writings tend finally toward nonviolence, while challenging the premise...that 'nonviolence' and 'sacrifice' are mutually exclusive."

Hunsinger next drew on certain contributions of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Thomas F. Torrance for a more adequate understanding of atonement than Girard provides.

Whereas Girard claims that the death of Jesus has no sacrificial meaning, Balthasar identifies five themes in the New Testament message of atonement: the self-giving of the Son for the sake of the world; the exchange between the one who is innocent and the many who are guilty before God; being saved *from* the

consequences of sin; being saved *for* participation in the eternal life of the Trinity; and the initiative of God's love. For Balthasar, there can be no separation between the cross and the Trinity.

Hunsinger then quoted from some unpublished writings of T. F. Torrance emphasizing the connection between the incarnation and the cross. We are saved, says Torrance, not by Christ's death but by Christ himself, "who in his own person made atonement for us....The atonement is identical with Christ himself."

Moreover, the suffering of Christ on the cross is not just a human event but a divine reality as well, so that the incarnation, the cross, and the Trinity are inseparably intertwined. And, according to Torrance, God's judgment is not antagonistic to his grace; God's self-giving *is* his judgment on humanity.

In the third section of his paper, Hunsinger looked to the theology of Karl Barth for a way of avoiding Girard's theological inadequacies while preserving his important insights into the primacy of the nonviolent God. He stressed the theme of enemy love and non-violence in Barth. "In the cross God did not meet his enemies with retaliation, retribution or crushing force. He met them with the mystery of suffering love." In this way we discern the inner unity of sacrifice and non-violence that eluded Girard.

Hunsinger then addressed the ethical implications of the cross. "The enemy-love enacted in the cross is what gives New Testament ethics its direction, its tendency, its dynamic." Christians are to love their enemies, "not because they are to conform to an abstract if noble principle, but because they know and may never forget that this is exactly how God has loved them." It is the cross of Christ that enjoins love of one's enemies.

In this context Barth calls for the renunciation of violence and appeals for "practical pacifism."

"As Christians suffer with Christ, and learn to love others as he loves them," Hunsinger concluded, "they will enter into correspondence with his cross, however remotely, and this correspondence will point in witness not to themselves but to him."

SCOTT RODIN

The final presentation of the conference was by Scott Rodin on Barth's understanding of God and evil. He suggested that Barth's doctrine of God (*Church Dogmatics*, Volume II), and not §50 on *das Nichtige* (III/3), is the key to Barth's understanding of evil.

Rodin's paper addressed the question, "Does Barth's doctrine of evil yield a theodicy which is helpful for the church today as it struggles with the questions of suffering and evil in the time between the resurrection and the *eschaton*?"

The body of the paper identified four motifs in Barth's doctrine of evil:

1. The "necessary antithesis" between evil and God's plan for creation. Rodin argued that there has

always been a need for the self-distinction of God from that which is "not-God." *Das Nichtigte* exists because God exists as the eternally self-differentiating God and as none other. If God is the eternally self-differentiating God, then there can be no talk of the creation of a world in which there is only good and no evil. The best of all possible worlds is one in which the inevitable evil is defeated and humanity is brought into direct fellowship with God. That is precisely the world that God has created. This "necessary antithesis" forms for Barth the ontic basis of evil, and it is his answer to the "why?" question in his theodicy.

2. The "right and left hand of God" where Barth, keen to combat all forms of dualism and to deny any sense of independence to evil, nonetheless must show that evil is wholly dependent upon God and also that God is not the Author of evil. To accomplish this, Barth employs the motif of the "right and left hand of God" which deals with the manifestation of evil (the noetic) as it flows from its ontic basis in the "necessary antithesis." God's left hand is associated with the rejecting will of God, that which negates in its non-willing of nothingness.

3. Barth's "noetic eschatology" which sees the completed work of salvation in the earthly work of Christ. The term "noetic eschatology" describes the fact that in Barth's theology the *eschaton* will be an unveiling of what we already are, and thus is to be wholly "noetic" (as opposed to "ontic" or "salvific"). This motif is critical to Barth's understanding of the role of evil after the cross. Evil exists in the shadow of the cross and the ontic union of all humanity in Christ, and therefore it can only have its peculiar "being" under the control of the left hand of God.

4. Barth's "revelatory positivism" based on the fact that theology is controlled by its Object, and that theological language concerning evil and sin is by nature imperfect.

Rodin then called attention to the way evil is treated throughout the *Church Dogmatics* under the idea of **separation**. Pointing to the "peculiar ontology" of evil in its state of rejection and separation from God and his creation, Rodin suggested that this activity of God's separation is carried out four times:

1. Eternally, as God's self-differentiation in his distinguishing himself from "not-God."
2. At creation, when God set his good creation off in opposition to what now in the space and time of creation became chaos.
3. On Calvary, where Genesis 1:2 is re-enacted, but this time once and for all, objectively and eternally in Christ.
4. In us, as we as God's creatures move from the "old nature" of sin and the "new creation" in Jesus Christ.

On the basis of the four motifs and the four separations identified above, Rodin formulated what he called a "Barthian theodicv" in response to three

forms of the theodicy question found in Hume, Dostoevsky, and Elie Wiesel, respectively.

Rodin concluded, "In the end, the answer to theodicy lies in one and only one place, in this very God of grace who is approached by his redeemed children in complete faith. Thus Barth takes us back to Job whose own answer to the question of evil was 'to flee from God to God.' That is the clear and difficult message which forms the heart of the Christian proclamation to the post-Christian world with regard to the sovereignty of God and the real presence of evil."

Rodin's paper provoked vigorous discussion.

Featured below are previews of the Barth Society sessions at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in November:

PREVIEW OF GENE ROGERS' PAPER

Karl Barth and Thomas Aquinas in Convergence on Romans 1?

Affinities emerge between Karl Barth and Thomas Aquinas just where modern Barthians and Thomists would both have thought convergence least likely: on the natural knowledge of God, according to Gene Rogers' paper on "Barth and Thomas in Convergence on Romans 1?" (to be presented on November 17 at the KBSNA program at the AAR/SBL annual meeting in Philadelphia).

The basis for this claim is the reading of Romans 1:20 in Barth's *Shorter Commentary (Kürze Darstellung)* and Thomas's own commentary on Romans (*Super epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos*), where each says surprising things under the pressure of Paul. Other topics include *Summa theologiae* q. 1, sacred doctrine, and christology.

Eugene F. Rogers Jr. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. His book, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God*, is soon to be published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

For those who wish to do some preparatory reading on the topic prior to the conference, Prof. Rogers suggests the following:

- Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*, pp. 24-31.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Super epistolam Sancti Pauli, Prologus* and *cap. 1 of the In Romanos*, esp. *Prologus* and *lectiones 6-7 of cap. 1*.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* Part I, questions 1 and 2; Part II-II, question 2, article 2.

PREVIEW OF KENDALL SOULEN'S PAPER

Karl Barth and the Future of the God of Israel

Perhaps no feature of Barth's thought is as fraught with promise and peril as his doctrine of Israel, Kendall Soulen observes. Rightly credited with almost singlehandedly recovering Israel's election as a central theme of Christian theology, Barth is also widely chastised for reiterating and even exacerbating some of the worst features of Christian polemic against Israel.

Soulen's paper, "Karl Barth and the Future of the God of Israel" (to be presented on November 17 at the KBSNA program at the AAR/SBL annual meeting) aims to provide a systematic context for evaluating both the achievement and the limitations of Barth's doctrine of Israel, and to suggest steps contemporary theology must take to proceed farther down the path Barth opened.

Today it is commonly recognized that the most problematic feature of the church's classical doctrine of Israel is supersessionism, the teaching that holds that the church supersedes or takes the place of carnal Israel in God's purposes after Christ's resurrection.

Focusing on supersessionism's place in classical (i.e., Irenaean) conceptions of the canon's narrative unity, Soulen argues that Christian theology has commonly displayed supersessionism in three distinct yet mutually reinforcing forms: economic, punitive, and structural.

According to Soulen, the lasting achievement of Barth's doctrine of Israel consists in deploying an Irenaean conception of the canon's unity in order to overcome "from within" two of these three forms of supersessionism: punitive and structural. In the process of doing so, however, Barth not only reaffirms but intensifies the logic of economic supersessionism, and this constitutes the central failure of Barth's doctrine of Israel.

In closing, Soulen argues that the task of overcoming supersessionism in all its forms demands that Christian theology reopen the decisive question that Irenaeus faced nearly two millennia ago in his battle with the Gnostics: how does the church's bi-partite canon hang together as a narrative and theological unity?

R. Kendall Soulen is Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

BRUCE McCORMACK'S BOOK

"Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology"

Bruce McCormack's book on *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936*, recently published by Oxford University Press, will be the subject of discussion on Saturday morning, November 18, at the KBSNA program at the AAR/SBL annual meeting in Philadelphia.

"Those planning to attend are urged to do a little preparatory homework by perusing those portions of the book which are of particular interest to them," said Walter Lowe, program chair.

McCormack states the book's thesis as follows:

"The central goal here will be to demonstrate that the 'turn' to a 'neo-orthodox' form of theology which is usually thought to have taken place with the *Church Dogmatics* in 1931-2 is a chimera. There was no such turn. Subsequent to his break with 'liberalism' in 1915, Barth became...a critically realistic dialectical theologian—and that is what he remained throughout his life....Where that has not been grasped, virtually the whole of Barth's theology has been read in the wrong light." (Preface, pp. vii-viii)

Bruce L. McCormack is the Frederick and Margaret L. Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Eastern Baptist symposium features Fergusson, Hunsinger

Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia will hold its third annual symposium on the theology of Karl Barth on Thursday, November 16, 1995.

This year's symposium will focus on the relationship between the individuality of the Christian and the unity of the community. A position statement is being formulated to which two guest speakers will respond, drawing from Barth's theology. Ample time will be given to discussion including small groups.

Speakers will be David A. S. Fergusson, Head of the Department of Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and George Hunsinger, resident scholar at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, N.J.

This year the symposium has been extended to a full day including a luncheon. It will be held the day before the KBSNA gathering at the AAR/SBL meeting, also in Philadelphia. "We hope many will come a day early and join us," said Scott Rodin, Eastern Seminary Vice President. For more information, contact Rodin at 1-800-220-3287.

Upcoming events:

- November 16, 1995* Third Annual Barth Symposium at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia
Theme: The Individuality of the Christian and the Unity of the Community
Speakers: David Fergusson, George Hunsinger
- November 17-18* Karl Barth Society program at AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, Philadelphia
Eugene Rogers: "Karl Barth and Thomas Aquinas on Romans 1"
Kendall Soulen: "Karl Barth and the Future of the God of Israel"
Bruce McCormack: "Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology"
- June 22-24, 1996* Seventh Biennial Barth Conference at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.
Theme: "The Necessary 'No!' and the Indispensable 'Yes!' —
Theological Controversy, Christology, and the Mission of the Church Today"

Contributions to the Newsletter are always appreciated. Please send comments, brief articles, news items, reviews or book notices, etc., to the Editor:

Russell W. Palmer, Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Nebraska
at Omaha, Omaha NE 68182-0265

Telephone: (402) 554-3066

FAX: (402) 554-3296

E-mail: rpalmer@unomaha.edu

KARL BARTH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Department of Philosophy and Religion
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

